

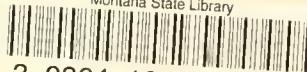
# Indian Education for All



## Model Teaching Unit - Language Arts Secondary Level

for James Welch's  
*Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and  
the Fate of the Plains Indians*

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Model Teaching Unit - Language Arts - Secondary Level  
For

# James Welch's *Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians*

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## Anchor Text

Welch, James with Paul Stekler. *Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co. First published in 1994, 2007 reprint.

## Fast Facts

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Genre	Historical Non-fiction and Memoir
Suggested Grade Level	11 – 12 (Select chapters may be used with students from grades 7-12)
Tribe (s)	Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne, Blackfeet, Crow
Place	North, Central, Southeastern Montana and Northern Wyoming Regions, Specifically: Big Bend of the Marias River and Little Bighorn River
Time	1869-1870, 1876, early 1990's

## About the Author and Illustrator

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James Welch was born in Browning, Montana in 1940. He attended school on the Blackfeet and Fort Belknap reservations and earned his B.A. from the University of Montana. Having taught at the University of Washington and at Cornell, he served on the Parole Board of the Montana Prisons Systems and on the Board of Directors of the Newberry Library D'Arcy McNickle Center. His published works include *The Death of Jim Loney* (1979), *Fools Crow* (1986), *Heartsong of Charging Elk* (2000), *The Indian Lawyer* (1990), *Riding the Earthboy 40*, (1976) and *Winter in the Blood* (1974). He has received many awards, including the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for fiction, an American Book Award, a Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France, and honorary doctorates from Rocky Mountain College and the University of Montana. In 1986, he won the American Book Award, and in 1997 the Lifetime Achievement Award for Literature, Native Writer's Circle. *Fools Crow* won the *Los Angeles Times Book Award* and the *Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award*.

Michael Moore, "The 100 Most Influential Montanans of the Century, #57, James Welch," *Missoulian* (1999) <http://missoulian.com/specials/100montanans/list/057.html>

Paul Stekler earned a Ph.D from Harvard in 1982. Director and co-writer with James Welch of Emmy award-winning *Last Stand at the Little Bighorn* in 1991, Paul Stekler was also nominated for his outstanding achievement in television writing for the film, *Last Man Standing: Politics Texas Style* in 2004. He is Professor of Public Affairs and Professor of Radio-Television-Film at the University of Texas in Austin.

## Text Summary

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This is Welch's first nonfiction work, based in the research he and Paul Stekler conducted for their script for the American Experience documentary *Last Stand at the Little Bighorn*. Beginning with Welch's search for answers to the questions How? and Why? for his ancestors' deaths at the Baker Massacre on the Marias, Welch goes on to explore the stories and search for answers to The Battle of the Little Bighorn.

*Killing Custer* represents Welch and Stekler's examinations of personal narratives, the frequently contradictory anthropological evidence, the cultural background of the Plains Indians, the economic and political situation in America at the time, and the stories behind typically empty textbook narratives.

Throughout the text, the voice and point of view shift, providing readers with a variety of experiences and resources as they work toward discovering the answers to the questions themselves. In the storyteller's voice, through his colloquial expressions, his profound understatement, and with details that flush out the smiles, Welch resurrects a much more human and more vulnerable, and somewhat less respectable, Custer.

This is a Custer who "left his column frequently to go hunting. On one such hunting trip, he was chasing a buffalo alone and shot his horse in the head when the buffalo swerved" (60). Welch also portrays the humanity and eccentricities of the Indians (Lakota) as well. "After much folderol, which included continuing jealousy and rivalry between Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, a spot was picked for the meeting--eight miles from Red Agency (neither chief would go to the other's agency)"(85).

In the expository voice, Welch and/or Stekler reports the research, theories, and conclusions from anthropologists, military records, recorded interviews with participants of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, as well as with descendants living today who have the oral records of their grandfathers' experiences. First describing the battle from the Indians' point of view, telling their stories about How? and Why? Welch turns to describe the battle from the point of view of the military and from the individual men involved. In graphic violent images, Welch describes the deaths and subsequent mutilations of many of the soldiers and Indians. And with Welch himself, as he looks at the battlefield, the readers are drawn to the place where this happened, to answer their own questions of how and why.

*Killing Custer* does not resurrect the Noble Indian. Instead, by looking at the multiple sides of this story, Welch presents to readers the complex humanity of all participants, demonstrating the terrible capabilities which may lie within us all. Through the vehicle of story, the substance of myth, James Welch demythologizes Custer's ill-fated attack on a huge encampment of Plains Indians on June 25, 1876. In *Killing Custer*, Welch resurrects not only the " fleeting, a good, often exhilarating feeling" of victory, and

not only the subsequent defeat which meant “death...of a way of life,” but he affirms this truth--that endurance of “The Indian spirit,” remains “hard to break” (286).

*Killing Custer* challenges popular myths, while it represents an exploration of stereotype—the truths behind the myths and the sometimes frightening truths about those who believe the myths. It demonstrates the way writers can verbally present and clarify contradictions, postulate theories, and then draw thoughtful conclusions based on available and unavailable evidence, and it is an excellent resource for an introduction into the cultures of Plains Indians.

## Materials

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- *Biography - George Custer: Showdown at Little Big Horn.* DVD. Starring, Jack Perkins, Peter Graves, Harry Smith, and Dave Hoffman. A & E Home Video, May 2, 2006.
- Bruchac, Joseph. *A Bay Called Slow.* Illustrated by Rocco Baviera. New York: Philomel Books. 1994.
- Bruchac, Joseph. *Crazy Horse's Vision.* Illustrated by S.D. Nelson. New York: Lee & Low Books. 2000.
- *Custer Massacre at Big Harn, Montana — June 25, 1876* (1899) lithograph. Artist unknown. Pictorial Americana: Western Life and Indian Fighting. Library of Congress. (Other visual representations of the event also available at this site.) <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/picamer/paWestern.html>
- Chaney, Rob. "Native stories, our stories: Gathering history - Struggle to bring Indians' past to light nears fruition." <http://missoulian.com/articles/2008/12/21/news/top/news01.txt>  
Bisco Spotted Wolf's grandfather was a war chief against the 7th Cavalry at the Battle of Little Bighorn, but his family kept the story secret for generations. The Montana Tribal History Project will reintroduce Spotted Wolf's Northern Cheyenne people and the rest of the state's tribal nations to the public school system next year.
- *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians.* Office of Public Instruction. <http://www.opi.mt.gov/> Indian Education for All – Background & Other Information. Revised 2008.
- "Fort Laramie Treaty." *Our Documents.* <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=42>
- Kuka, King. "Baker Massacre." 1995 Painting. *Montana: Stories of the Land*, by Krys Holmes. Chapter 7. p. 135. Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press. 2008.  
<http://mhs.mt.gov/education/textbook/Chapter7/Chapter7.asp>
- *Montana Indians: Their History and Location.* Office of Public Instruction. <http://www.opi.mt.gov/> Indian Education for All – Background & Other Information. Revised April, 2009.
- National Center for the Study of Adult learning and Literacy. (NCSALL).  
<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=208>
- "The People of the Great Plains Part I;" "The People of the Great Plains Part II." *The Native Americans Series.* Video-cassettes (48 min. each). Atlanta, GA: TBS Productions. 1994.
- Plenty, Len. "The Bighorn River." *Rising Voices—Writings of Young Native Americans*, eds. Arlene Hirschfelder and Beverly R. Singer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1992.
- Regional Learning Project: Multi-media educational materials about American Indians and regional history. (A site for maps.) University of Montana Continuing Education.  
[www.regionallearningproject.org/ed%20products/tribal.php](http://www.regionallearningproject.org/ed%20products/tribal.php)
- "The Seven Rituals." Chapter 10. *Oceti Sakowin: The People of the Seven Council Fires.* DVD (Provided to Montana school libraries by the Office of Public Instruction). South Dakota Public Broadcasting. 2008.
- *Son of the Morning Star.* DVD. Starring Gary Cole and Rosanna Arquette. IMDbPro. 1991.

- Susag, Dorothea. *Roots and Branches: A Resource of Native American Literature, Themes, Lessons, and Bibliographies*. Urbana, IL: The National Council of Teachers of English. 1998.
- Walter, David. "The Massacre on the Marias." *Montana Campfire Tales*. Helena, Montana: TwoDot Press. 1997.
- Welch, James. "The Man from Washington." *Riding the Earthboy - 40 - Poems*. Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press. 1990.
- Welch, James with Paul Stekler. *Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co. First published in 1994, 2007 reprint.
- Welch, James and Paul Stekler. "Last Stand at Little Big Horn: The Battle Where Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse Fought Custer and an American Myth Was Born." *American Experience Series*. DVD. WGBH Boston Video. 2005.
- "Wounded Knee." Episode 5. *We Shall Remain*. DVD. PBS. 2009.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/> The DVD's from this series are not specifically referenced in lessons because they have just been released. However, they are most valuable.

### Implementation Level, Essential Understandings and MT Content Standards

Implementation Levels		Essential Understandings - Big Ideas			Montana Content Standards	
4	Social Justice	X	1-There is great diversity between tribes.	4-Tribes reserved a portion of their land-base through treaties.	Reading – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5; 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8; 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7; 5.1, 5.2, 5.4	Social Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 2.2, 2.4a, 2.4.b, 2. 6; 2.7; 3.4; 4.2, 4.4a, 4.4b, 4.6; 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5
3	Transformative	X	2-There is great diversity between individuals within any tribe.	S-History is told from subjective experience and perspective.	Writing – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3; 4.1, 4.2, 4.3; 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4;	
2	Additive	X	3-Ideologies, traditions, beliefs, and spirituality continue through a system of oral traditions.	6-Federal Indian policies shifted through seven major periods.	Literature – 1.1, 1.5, 1.6; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4; 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4; 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4	Speaking/Listening 2.2, 2.3, 2.5; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4;
1	Contributions			7-Three forms of sovereignty exist in the US - federal, state, & tribal.		

### Learning Targets

- I pose questions and pursue answers to essential questions raised from my reading *Killing Custer*.
- I examine, explain, and evaluate various perspectives and contradictions found in *Killing Custer* and other related works in this unit.
- I demonstrate oral, written, and/or artistic responses to ideas in *Killing Custer* and other works in this unit, and I can relate themes and issues to my own personal experience.
- I interpret the text on a variety of levels based on cultural and historical influences.
- I recognize and articulate how the choice of language and literary devices enhances meaning and impacts individuals and society.

- I interact with, analyze, and share responses to non-fiction, poetry, and media texts from works written by American Indians and Euro-Americans.
- I clearly and effectively write, revise and edit responses to my reading, essays, and R.A.F.T.S. assignments.
- I evaluate my growth as a writer and thinker while I grow in my understanding of Montana Indians.
- I understand the historical and contemporary diversity of tribes and individuals, as well as the significance of historical, political, and cultural influences on them and on their neighbors.
- I understand the way perspective is influenced by historical, cultural, and personal experiences and that perspective influences meaning.

## Day by Day Plan - Steps

*Killing Custer* may be the students' first experience with the genre of full-text non-fiction. Therefore, because its subject is history, the text and supplemental materials are best taught as a two to six week English/History unit with possible Title I support for students who have difficulty reading.

Through reading *Killing Custer* and participating in this unit, students can develop lasting understandings such as these:

- Culture, history, and personal experience shape and define perspective
- Perspective influences meaning for the writer, the reader, historical and present-day audiences, and those meanings might differ from each other.
- Understanding and respect and insight into the beliefs, actions, and experiences of others are gained when we listen to them tell their stories.
- History we read is most often the stories told by the winners in political, economic, and cultural conflicts.

### Teacher Tip:

Through the discussion of Culture, History, and Personal Experience, students may construct some working definitions that they will re-examine and possibly change as the unit progresses.

These are some preliminary definitions for you to help your students:

**CULTURE:** Culture includes systems of language, governance, economics, religion and ceremony, education, defense (health and political), ways of defining sexuality, ways of manipulating space and time and giving them meaning, forms of recreation, and values systems surrounding truth, faith, justice, love, and beauty.

**HISTORY:** *infoplease* at <http://dictionary.infoplease.com/history> defines history as "the record of past events and times, esp. in connection with the human race." (Reading *Killing Custer* will provide a much more expansive and contrasting definition. The *infoplease* definition simply represents the prevailing "academic" operative regarding "history.")

**MYTH:** For the purposes of this unit, "Myth" is defined as story which grows into popular belief in cultures and communities. It is accepted or rejected or colored and defined by world view. According to the Missoula Arts & Humanities Coalition SCOPE update – 9-2-01, "Myths, the essential building blocks of our culture, are created out of outright lies, half truths, distorted facts, dreams, wishes, fantasies, ethnic aspirations, to name just a few ingredients." Students may examine myths by asking three questions: What are the truths behind the myth? What are the contradictory truths behind the myth? What does our belief in the myth reveal about us?

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:** This is as varied as the individuals, but it may include parents and marriage or divorce, birth order, home, school, significant events both happy and sad, achievements.

## Day One

### Introduction to Perspective

Discuss the following questions and provide examples to help students who struggle with answers. This will provide a foundation of inquiry that can help students approach the many perspectives they will encounter in *Killing Custer*.

- If you were assigned to write an *autobiography* or a *biography* about one month in the life of the person on your right, what kind of problems would you encounter?
- What difference does it make who writes the stories as long as they tell the “truth?”
- What might get in the way of your telling his or her story as an accurate or truthful account of your neighbor’s life?
- What is ethnocentrism?
- What is bias?
- Is it possible to be unbiased?
- What is a stereotype?
- Can a stereotype be positive?
- Can a positive stereotype produce negative consequences?
- How does stereotyping limit individuals?
- What is Culture? History? Myth? Personal Experience? How does each help define us as individuals?

### Activity:

Journal Entry--Reflect and write. Choose one or more of the terms discussed and write about the connections you might make with your own life. For example: What is an aspect of your culture, your history, your myth, your personal experience that may affect the way you see others who might differ from you?

“Perceptions govern how we interact. How we interact is always based on how we perceive each other – lesson today – let’s look beyond that.” Joseph Marshall III, Helena, MT, October 10, 2008

## Day Two and Three

Show the film *Last Stand at the Little Bighorn* in two class periods before students begin to read. They may take notes regarding dates or events. However, it might be valuable for them to make a list of speakers they see and hear in the film to acquaint them with individuals they will read about in *Killing Custer*. More advanced students might watch and note contradictions in sources and representations. (See Appendix D)

### Possible Note Sheet

Name of Speaker	Political or Cultural Affiliation, Tribe or Military	What speaker says or does that you find interesting, confusing, disturbing, or enlightening	I Wonder Questions?

**Reading Assignment in *Killing Custer*:**

Review the Title and consider what it means. Review the Montana Territory Map (The Indian Wars 1866-1890) by Jacques Chazaud. Read Acknowledgments (9-10) and Chronology - Events involving the Teton Sioux, or Lakota, from 1775, ending with the Massacre at Wounded Knee on December 29, 1890 (11-13).

**Day Four**

1. Ask students for their interpretations of "Killing Custer" as the title. What is this book going to be about?
2. Students are best drawn into the text when they hear Welch's powerful language and imagery read aloud, especially Chapter 1, which is based in part on the passed down story from a survivor, Welch's great-grandmother, Red Paint Woman.

**Prologue (17-23)**

**Summary :**

- Welch's meeting with Paul Stekler and the film they produced, concluding with Welch's rationale for writing this book.

**Chapter 1 ( 25-47)**

**Summary:**

- The narrative of the January 23, 1870 Massacre on the Marias, infused with Welch's personal experiences visiting the site fifteen miles east of Shelby, Montana.
- "The outcome of the Indian wars was never in doubt. It is a tribute to the Indians' spirit that they resisted as long as they did. Custer's Last Stand has gone down in history as an example of what savagery the Indians were capable of; the Massacre on the Marias is a better example of what man is capable of doing to man." (47)

**Activity:**

Journal Entry--Reflect and write. Tell a story about a relative or ancestor who survived a traumatic or catastrophic event?

**Day Five**

1. Review the sequence of events from Chapter 1.
2. Discuss use of language and images, issues of myth, and contradictions of previously held beliefs.
3. Complete the reading of Chapter 1 and assign Chapter 2 for the next day.

**Assignment:** Read Chapter 2

**Chapter 2 (48-73)**

**Summary:**

- The rising conflict – causes and consequences -- between the U.S. Government/ Military and the Plains Indians, beginning with an explanation of the Sun Dance, followed with descriptions of events that led to the Battle of the Little Bighorn and the individuals who made them happen, including Sitting Bull, Crook, and Custer.

**Activity:**

Journal Entry--Write a story an elderly person tells you, from his/her perspective, in 3<sup>rd</sup> person.

**Day Six and Seven**

**Activity:**

Assign one of the following sections to each student at the beginning of class. (See Appendix A)

1. Sun Dance - 48-50 middle of page
2. Sitting Bull - last paragraph 50-53 top
3. Push to Reservations - 53-54 top
4. Crook - 54-56 top
5. March 17, 1875 attack - 56-57 3rd paragraph
6. Custer - 57-60
7. Custer - last line 60-62 top line
8. Black Kettle - 62-64 top 2 lines
9. Elliott and Kate Bighead - 64-65 2nd to last paragraph
10. Sitting Bull - last paragraph 65-67 2nd paragraph
11. Red Cloud - 67-68 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph
12. Ft. Laramie Treaty - 68-69 next to last paragraph
13. Red Cloud and treaty - bottom of 69-71 3rd paragraph
14. Indian way of fighting – 3rd paragraph 71-73 end.

**Teacher Tip:** In order to better guide students through this **Activity**, teachers should complete the A.B.C.D. directions and questions for each section ahead of time. For some, this is a challenging **Activity**. They might not find evidence for B and C in every section. However, if they can identify one word or phrase in response to B and C and D, that should be regarded as a significant achievement.

\*\*\*It's very important that each student has read the entire chapter before the **Activity**.

Working alone or in pairs with designated pages for fifteen minutes, students should be prepared to share their responses to the **following directions** with the rest of the class.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote.
- D. What is the effect of that bias on you as a reader, or, perhaps, on readers at the time of the battle?

**Activity:** Journal Entry--Reflect and write about

- One contradiction you read or heard about during this **Activity**. How can that contradiction be resolved or explained? If not, why not?
- The definition of History?
- How might the alliances of military and tribes or tribes and tribes impact the relationships between some tribal communities and people today

**Assignment:** Begin reading Chapter 3

**Chapter 3 (74-94)**

**Summary:**

- The cultural and historical background of some Plains Indians (Lakota and Cheyenne) as the Americans encroached on treated lands, conflicts and rivalries between the Lakota Indians, their leaders (Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse), and with President Ulysses S. Grant and his policy to push all Indians on the Great Sioux reservation which included the Black Hills, according to the Fort Laramie Treaty in 1868.
- The Black Hills now, as Welch viewed it himself, and the actions of the American Indian movement, including issues surrounding the Massacre at Wounded Knee, 1890, and the "violent confrontation" (79) in 1973

**Chapter 3 Summary Continued:**

- George Armstrong Custer's 1874 "expedition" into the Black Hills, the subsequent rush for gold, and the "negotiations" for U.S. Government purchase of the Black Hills from the Indians.
- Reasons the Cheyenne and Sioux placed such importance on the Black Hills: by treaty they belonged to them, they are sacred, and their physical and cultural survival depended on the Black Hills.
- Reasons the United States of America placed such importance on the acquisition of the Black Hills: the railroad and its need for settlers in the West, the stock market crash of 1873, the need for gold to allow the economy to grow.

**Day Eight****Activity:**

View Chapter 10 "*The Seven Rituals*" in *Oceti Sakowin: The People of the Seven Council Fires* for a presentation of a Lakota view of Sun Dance. (DVD provided to school libraries by the Office of Public Instruction.) Reflect on the meaning of sacred.

**Day Nine****Activity:**

Quiz over Chapters 1, 2, 3. (See Appendix E)

Prepare "Chapter 3 Activity" for Debate over the Indians and European-Americans claims or "rights" to the Black Hills. (See Appendix B)

Read Welch's "The Man from Washington" in *Riding the Earthboy 40*.

**Day Ten and Eleven****Activity:**

Chapter 3 Debate

**Teacher Tip:** Just as in competitive debate, students should be prepared to argue either the affirmative or the negative, and the assignment of which side should be arbitrary. However, a teacher in Poplar who used this unit found that her students wanted to write essays in support of *Indians had the stronger claim to the Black Hills than the European Americans*. Then she videotaped them reading their essays.  
\*\*\*It's very important that each student has read the entire chapter before the activity.

**Activity:**

Journal Entry--Reflect and write about how your personal experience and culture might affect your opinion on this topic.

**Assignment:** Read Chapter 4**Chapter 4 (95-110)****Summary:**

- The influences of the media (particularly western movies and their perversion of Indians) on the American consciousness, as well as on Welch himself as he grew up, part white and part Indian.

#### Chapter 4 Summary Continued:

- What's changed and what's stayed the same at the site of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, with Welch imagining and observing traveling through the battlefield, beginning with an act of Congress in June of 1991 that changed the name of the battlefield, resulting in "the official recognition that the Indians were human beings, not simple 'hostiles,' not simply obstacles to be overcome" (100).
- Changes in the river, the population as a reservation now, the languages spoken that include visitors from around the world, the visitor center, markers of the dead, etc.
- Description of the place and time from the Indian perspective in contrast with the "tour" which shows the battle "from the white point of view" (109). "It is a different perspective. And as you look up at those cliffs across the river you can almost imagine the terror that visited the peaceful village. You can almost imagine that you are there" (110).

#### Day Twelve

##### Activity:

In workshop groups of 3-4, students will look at what's changed and what's stayed the same at the site of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. What does Welch notice? To extend the students' experience with place, read Len Plenty's poem, "Little Bighorn River," in *Rising Voices*. What does the Little Bighorn mean to this Crow boy?

##### Activity:

Discuss the various voices in the text; look for examples of informal, historical, objective tone.

#### Day Thirteen

##### Activity:

Watch the TBS Video *Native Americans: The Plains Part II* on Sand Creek, Wounded Knee, and Sitting Bull OR "Wounded Knee." Episode 5. *We Shall Remain*. DVD. PBS. 2009.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/>

##### Activity:

Discuss the way music, lighting, and point of view of the camera might influence meaning and perspective in this film.

##### Activity:

Journal Entry--Reflect and write about how the film changed what you had thought or believed before? What do you understand today that you didn't understand before?

#### Day Fourteen

##### Activity: Read in class Chapter 5 to be finished by the next day.

#### Chapter 5 (111-128)

##### Summary:

- June 17, 1876, the Battle of the Rosebud - causes, consequences, contradictions, and conflicting reports.
- Crazy Horse, *Tasunka Witko*, who led the attack nine days before the Battle of the Little Bighorn against General George Crook, who withdrew to Wyoming and didn't warn "his fellow commanders up north, General Terry and Gibbon, that he and his troops were out of it," and would not be involved with the Battle of the Little Bighorn (125).

**Activity:**

As you read, keep a list of phrases (and page numbers) that demonstrate the author(s) attention to the value of sources or information, using words such as *valid*, *important*, *possibly inaccurate*, or *contradictory*.

*Day Fifteen*

**Activity:**

Complete the reading and leave 20 minutes for discussion of students' notes regarding the value of sources or information, using words such as *valid*, *important*, *possibly inaccurate*, or *contradictory*.

**Assignment:** Read Chapter 6

**Chapter 6 (129-148)**

- Contradictions and truths surrounding personalities and events to answer the question "Who was the Indian?"
- Custer expressed admiration for Indians, but "harbored ill-disguised contempt for them as a people" (129)
- "Almost all of the clichés about Plains Indians are true," (131) and then Welch provides evidence that supports or contradicts this statement, concluding with the statement that "The Indian was not a cliché" (148).

**Activity:**

Journal Entry--As you read, make a list of at least 20 places where the author(s) provide evidence that may contradict the original statement, yet *both* are true, according to the authors.

How was the Indian described by Welch? Answer the question, "Who was the Indian?" How does Welch bring this discussion into contemporary times?

*Day Sixteen*

**Activity:**

In workshop groups of 3-4, students discuss their written responses to contradictions, with speakers from each group reporting during the last 20 minutes.

**Assignment:** Read Chapter 7

**Chapter 7 (149-197)**

Some of the leading questions Welch and Stekler ask related to "mysteries surrounding the Battle of the Little Bighorn." Answers, evidence, and surrounding controversies. (See Appendix C)

- Why weren't the Indians better prepared for the 7th Cavalry's attack on their village? (152)
- Where was Sitting Bull during the fight? Why? (157)
- What was Custer's intention at the ford where Medicine Tail Coulee empties into the Little Bighorn? (161)
- Why did Custer divide his already inferior forces into two battalions? (162)
- What happened to the soldiers during the fight? (171)
- Who were the "suicide boys" and what's the story? (172)
- Did the Indians know that they were fighting Custer? (172)
- Who did kill Custer? (179)

**Activity:**

Journal Entry--As you read, identify *5 questions* that the author(s) pose in this chapter, and then answer each in a short paragraph.

*Day Seventeen and Eighteen*

**Activity:**

- Watch excerpts from any “classic” movie about George Armstrong Custer, for example, *Son of the Morning Star*. Look for suggestions in the Materials list.
- View: An 1899 lithograph entitled *Custer Massacre at Big Horn, Montana — June 25, 1876* Artist unknown. Pictorial Americana: Western Life and Indian Fighting. Library of Congress. (Other visual representations of the event also available at this site: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/picamer/paWestern.html>)

**Activity:**

Ask students the following questions:

- How do the film and the lithograph portray the Indians and Custer?
- What words come to mind as a description of either the Indians or Custer in the film and lithograph?
- Are these representations accurate? How do you know?
- How might your reading of Chapter 7 and others in *Killing Custer* affect the way you understand these movies today?

**Assignment:** Read Chapter 8

**Chapter 8 (198-226)**

**Summary:**

- Descriptions of people Welch and Stekler interviewed or met as they conducted their research for the documentary film and the stories surrounding them. A valuable read for young people preparing to conduct primary research based on oral interviews.

**Activity:**

Journal Entry--Make a list of people Welch meets in chapter 8 and write a one-sentence description of each. (About 15) What struck you about the personalities, the way Welch wrote about them, anything that disturbed you?

*Day Nineteen*

In smaller groups, students share their “favorite people” that Welch met and provide rationales for the students’ choices.

**Activity:**

With the class as a whole, talk about the ways Welch uses sensory images on pages 212-213. What is the effect on a reader?

On pages 216-217, what is the importance of the primary document?

**Assignment:** Chapter 9

**Chapter 9 (227-251)**

- An autobiographical account of Welch and his parents who attended boarding schools and then worked for Indian agencies, schools and hospitals, from Oregon to Fort Belknap, Montana.
- One day Welch's mother brought home some documents she found in the basement of the agency – annual reports from Fort Belknap Indian agents to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1880, 1887, and 1897.
- Welch describes the contents of these reports and their impact on him, particularly as one mentions Sitting Bull in the vicinity of the Milk River, just miles from where Welch was living.
- What happened to Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse, in particular, following the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

**Activity:**

Journal Entry--After you've finished reading Chapter 9, write one-half page in response to any of these four D.I.C.E. prompts: What did you find **Disturbing**? What did you find **Interesting**? What did you find **Confusing**? What did you find **Enlightening**?

*Day Twenty*

**Activity:**

Break into groups of 3 to discuss the following from Chapter 9: *What's confusing, disturbing, interesting or enlightening?*

The goal of this **Activity** is conversation rather than answers to specific questions. Following each person reading his/her response to the small group, instruct the other group members to ask follow-up questions, to provide clarification or explanation when a peer is confused. The difficulty is keeping students focused on the group they're in rather than interacting with other groups. However, it is certainly worth it because they learn to listen to each other and to respect each other.

**Assignment:** Chapter 10

**Chapter 10 (252-271)**

**Summary:**

- The experiences of Sitting Bull, "determined to live in his grandmother's country," (256) his association with the Ghost Dance religion, the deterioration of the Hunkpapa people from 1877 to his death in 1890, just two weeks before December 29 when "a band of Minneconjou Ghost Dancers, led by Big Foot, were gunned down by the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at a place called Wounded Knee. Custer's old outfit had put an end to one of the greatest resistance movements in history" (271)

*Day Twenty-one*

**Activity:**

Discuss the ways Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull responded to increasing pressure from the U.S. Government. What were their choices?

Read aloud from two picture books by Joseph Bruchac: *A Boy Called Slow* and *The Vision of Crazy Horse*.

**Activity:**

**R. (role) A. (audience) F. (format) T. (topic) S. (strong verb)** writing assignment

From the perspective of either Crazy Horse or Sitting Bull, tell the stories to your children about your experiences, what you've learned about yourself and your people, and what you've learned about what's most important in life. (Write as though you are telling the story)

**Day Twenty-two**

**Assignment:** Read in class the Epilogue, Afterword, Prologue, and Acknowledgments.

**Epilogue (273-286)**

- A description of the June filming for the documentary.
- Welch's reflection about the "propriety" (277) of what they were doing, being on Crow land and making a film about their enemies.
- The media response to the death of Custer, together with Libbie Custer's reaction and subsequent writing of three books that "did the most to keep her husband's name and honor bright and shining" (283).
- A conclusion with a discussion of the meaning of victory and defeat, how humans respond to each. And finally in reference to Black Elk who was a child at Big Horn and also present at Wounded Knee, Welch writes, "The Indian spirit was, and remains, hard to break."

**Afterword (287-296)**

- By Paul Stekler "Filming '*The Last Stand*'" with a final image of one of their most important sources, Joe Medicine Crow who stuns the film crew with his grandfather's war song.
- "It was an extraordinary moment, the kind that film makers can only hope for."

**Activity:**

Journal Entry--Make a list of at least 5 things you learn from reading this section about *writing, making a film, ways to approach a project, etc.* Connect this reading with yourself and what you might need to know to be a better writer, researcher, film maker.

**Day Twenty-two**

**Closing Activity and Discussion:**

Final Journal Entry--React to your reading and the workshopping of *Killing Custer* and other readings and DVD's and write responses to the following questions:

- What made it easy? What made it difficult? What worked best? What didn't work? Has this unit enhanced your communication skills (reading, writing, and speaking) or has it not? Explain your answer.
- How has the reading of *Killing Custer* and related activities changed what you know and understand about yourself and about Indians (Lakota, Cheyenne, and Crow) and Euro-Americans and history?
- What have you learned about the writing of history and the responsibilities of researchers?
- How has the reading of *Killing Custer* affected (or not affected) the way you read? What have you learned about yourself and the way you approach reading difficult texts?

- Looking at the questions we discussed on the first day of the unit, how would you answer them today? How would you define culture, history, myth, and personal experience? What does the title mean?
- How does *Killing Custer* support or contradict popular stereotypes?

## Assessment

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Students will:

1. Keep a journal of daily writing based on the “Activity” assignments associated with each day’s reading and discussion.
2. Be held accountable for each day’s reading.
3. Make a documentary video of a story from their community that portrays the various voices and sometimes contradictory evidence, especially as it dispels a commonly held belief.
4. Write an essay response, using the text as a resource that requires them to think about what this reading has taught about myth, truths about myth, the reporting of history, what they understand about Indians (Lakota, Cheyenne, and Crow) in Montana.
5. Take an objective and essay test (See Appendix F).
6. Create character studies of Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Custer. According to the research of Welch and Stekler, who were they? What are the contradictions within each of these figures that Welch and Stekler portray regarding behavior, motivations, and values?
7. Write poems in response to reading or to characterize a significant figure or place.
8. Be evaluated on their participation in daily discussion and activities.
9. Write, revise, and edit an expository essay with thesis statement.

**Essay: R.A.F.T.S. assignment** --You will write an expository essay for publication as an extensive review for an audience of teachers who might consider using *Killing Custer* in their classes. Consider any of the following questions as you think of the statement: How has the reading of this book [opt. and the visit to the massacre site] changed what you know about history or about people or about yourself? What has this reading taught you about myth, truths about myth, the reporting of history, etc.? Use no more than six lines of quotes from the text and be sure you cite the pages in your text. You may include some of the material you wrote for the above assignment. The essay will be evaluated in three drafts: #1 for Revision workshop, #2 for Peer Editing Workshop (conventions), and #3 for final evaluation by peers and teacher. (See Appendix H)

## Teacher Notes and Cautions

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- Some American Indian educators have expressed concern about using a text such as this, with so much pain attached, to teach writing and reading skills. Therefore, just as with any sensitive material that reflects the real human experience, teachers should make sure students are always aware that *Killing Custer* is not a story we read for entertainment. In many instances, we hear descendants telling about the greatest of all tragedies in the lives of individuals and communities. Respect for all is critical.
- The chapters in *Killing Custer* do not necessarily follow each other sequentially. Consequently, it is possible for teachers to make selections of individual chapters and the activities if time doesn’t permit the incorporation of the entire unit.

## Vocabulary

**Teacher Tip:** Many of these words indicate perspective. Consequently, in their definitions, students should indicate "according to military or Cheyenne or Crow or historians or Indian elders etc." For example, who would have used the term "marauders" and why?

### Chapter 1

Tribal Names  
*Napikwans*  
depredations  
annihilation  
marauders  
decimated  
massacre/battle (know the difference)  
ravished  
promontory  
formidable  
gumbo  
subjugation

### Chapter 2

*Wiwanyag wachipi/Sun Dance*  
expiate  
*Wakan Tanka*  
awl  
ledger drawing  
demoralized  
reconnaissance  
arrogance  
invincibility  
acclamation  
*wasichus*  
inarable  
count coup

### Chapter 3

chronic  
annuities  
AIM  
recalcitrant  
obtuse  
relinquishment  
folderol  
land-grant  
entrepreneurs  
Gilded Age  
graft  
chicanery

### Chapter 4

disinterred  
sacrilege  
elicited  
miscreants  
homogenized  
bigotry  
serendipitous  
ominous  
western myths  
besiegement  
manifold

**Chapter 5**

sanctioned  
sutlership  
*akecita*  
pincer attack  
reconnoiter  
reconnaissance  
hubris  
ebullient

**Chapter 6**

ambivalent  
cliché  
prolific  
sacred bundle  
pemmican  
*pishkun*  
travois  
commodities  
flamboyant  
contrived  
indiscriminately  
atrocities  
tractable  
appellation

**Chapter 7**

battalion  
prudent  
penchant  
complacent  
skirmish  
coulee  
ravine  
artifact  
incarnate  
mutilation  
medicine (from Indian perspective)  
hardtack  
siege  
confluence  
rations

**Chapter 8**

aficionado  
curator  
exhilarating

**Chapter 9**

winter sickness  
indomitable  
ceded territory  
morose  
“mole”

**Chapter 10**

sedentary  
counterpart  
meager  
fealty  
imperious  
largess  
allotment  
cajolement  
impregnable

**Epilogue**

*pièce de résistance*  
minimalist  
affluence  
memorabilia

## Extension Activities

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### 1. Independent Reading Opportunities:

- Eastman, Charles A. (Santee Sioux). *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. 241 pp. ISBN: 0-9-32-6720-7
- Harcey, Dennis W. and Brian R. Croone with Joe Medicine Crow. *White-Man-Runs-Him: Crow Scout with Custer*. IL: Evanston Publishing. 1993.
- Kammen, Robert, Joseph Marshall III and Frederick Lefthand. *Soldiers Falling into Camp: The Battles at the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn Encampment*. WY: Affiliated Writers of America. 1992.
- Linderman, Frank B. *Plenty Coups: Chief of the Crows*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962. 324 pp. ISBN: 0-9-32-5121-1 (*Roots and Branches* 165)
- Linderman, Frank B. and Alma Hogan Snell, Becky Matthews. *Pretty-Shield (Second Edition): Medicine Woman of the Crows*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2003.
- Marquis, Thomas, Interpreter. *Wooden Leg: A Warrior Who Fought Custer (Cheyenne)*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1931. 384 pp. ISBN: 0-9-32-5124-6 (*Roots and Branches* 167-168)
- Marshall, Joseph M. III (Lakota). *The Journey of Crazy Horse: A Lakota History*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. 310 pp. ISBN: 0-14-303621-1
- Snee, Virginia Driving Hawk. (Lakota). *They Led A Nation: The Sioux Chiefs*. Sioux Falls, SD, 1975. 46 pp. ISBN: 88498-027-8
- Stands in Timber, John and Margot Liberty. *Cheyenne Memories*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1972. ISBN: 0-9-61-1575-0 (*Roots and Branches* 134-135)

### 2. History Class Options:

- If this unit is taught in both History and English, the teachers may divide their teaching responsibilities according to the expertise of the teacher. Otherwise, the history teacher could help students create a time line that extends the Chronology on pages 11-13 in *Killing Custer*. Additionally, while one teacher conducts discussions in class, the other may have students read chapters and complete writing assignments.
- Students can list events, places, dates, in sequence (Including Welch's visits, such as to Battleground in 1974). They may ask questions and conduct research into selected events or individuals and portray the results of their research in diagrams, drawings, and written summaries to be posted in the classroom.
- Teachers can provide supplemental information about Federal Indian Policy, particularly the Treaty Period, referencing *Essential Understandings of Montana Indians #4 and#S*, and *A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy* by Stan Juneau from [www.opi.mt.gov](http://www.opi.mt.gov) Indian Education for All, Resources and Background Information.
- The History Class is the place where students can keep track of prominent figures, places, and dates; tribes and their positions, alliances between tribes and with the military; and treaties.

### 3. Expedition Activity:

If possible, plan a trip to the Marias Massacre Site. You may make arrangements with faculty at the Blackfeet Community College. They will escort your bus to the site and will orally present to students the research that they have collected and their elders have passed down. Students' responsibilities are explained in the Appendix under "Expedition and Memoir Writing."

**Alternate Activity:** students may take a "virtual expedition," by means of the painting titled "Baker Massacre," by Blackfeet artist King Kuka (1946-2004). See p. 135 of Chapter 7 ("Two Worlds Collide 1850-1887") in *Montana Stories of the Land*. <http://mhs.mt.gov/education/textbook/Chapter7/Chapter7.asp>

## Appendix A

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### Chapter 2 Activity Sheet

(Reproduce so each student in each group has a copy.)

#### 1. Sun Dance - 48-50 middle of page

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)

B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts

C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

#### 2. Sitting Bull - last paragraph 50 - 53 top

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)

B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts

C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

#### 3. Push to Reservations - 53 - 54 top

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)

B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts

C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

#### 4. Crook - 54 - 56 top

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)

B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts

C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

#### 5. March 17, 1875 attack - 56 - 57 3rd paragraph

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)

B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts

C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**6. Custer - 57 - 60**

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**7. Custer - last line 60 - 62 top line**

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**8. Black Kettle - 62 - 64 top 2 lines**

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**9. Elliott and Kate Bighead - 64-65 2nd to last paragraph**

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**10. Sitting Bull - last paragraph 65 - 67 2nd paragraph**

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**11. Red Cloud** - 67 - 68 paragraph 1

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**12. Ft. Laramie Treaty** - 68-69 next to last paragraph

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**13. Red Cloud and treaty** - bottom of 69 - 71 3rd paragraph

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

**14. Indian way of fighting** - 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph 71 - 73 end.

Assign: Working alone on the above topic and pages, be prepared to share your answers to the following questions after 15 minutes.

- A. Make a list of facts (places, events, dates, characteristics or behaviors of individuals)
- B. Look for evidences of contradictions or contrasts
- C. Identify bias in either Welch (or Steckler) or individuals or newspapers they quote. What is the *effect* of that bias on you as a reader, or on the readers of the time?

## Appendix B

### Chapter 3 Activity Sheet

(Reproduce so each student in each group has a copy.)

Debate the following question: *The European Americans had a stronger claim to the Black Hills than the Indians.*

1. Divide the class into two groups
2. Give the #1 group the Affirmative (must prove with evidence that the statement is true)  
Give the #2 group the Negative (must prove with evidence that the Indians had a stronger claim to the Black Hills)
3. Give them 15 minutes to build their cases - the chapter alone should provide enough evidence for each side.
4. Each group will select a speaker who will present the case to the audience.  
**Never does more than one person ever speak at a time!**

**Format for debate:**

**Affirmative - 3 minutes maximum** - tell them they should begin with this statement: "As the affirmative speaker in today's debate, I stand firmly resolved that *The European Americans had a stronger claim to the Black Hills than the Indians.* To prove our case we will provide the following evidence or reasons:

**Questions of Affirmative speaker from Negative team - 2 minutes maximum**  
(You can decide if the group members can ask questions or if only the speaker)

**Negative Speaker – 3-minute maximum** -- tell them they should begin with this statement: "As the negative speaker in today's debate, I intend to show the weakness in the affirmative's claim and arguments, and I will argue that the *Indians had a stronger claim to the Black Hills than the European Americans.*"

**Questions of Negative speaker from Affirmative team - 2 minutes maximum**

**Affirmative Rebuttal - 2 minutes** (Purpose is to recover lost ground that the affirmative gained and to conclude with the argument)

**Negative Rebuttal - 2 minutes** (Purpose is to show one aspect of the affirmative case that isn't secure - that's all the negative needs to win.)

However you want to manage this debate is fine--more or less formal, whatever seems appropriate. Students should see where they might be arguing illogically or stating broad generalizations to win their case. Include more rebuttals if there is time. **This particular question should lead to a debate of values - what's more important: economic security and even prosperity or spiritual and communal survival?**

## Appendix C

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### Chapter 7 Activity Sheet

(Reproduce so each student in each group has a copy.)

In this chapter, what are some of the *leading* questions Welch and Stekler ask related to “mysteries surrounding the Battle of the Little Bighorn”? What are their answers? What evidence supports their answers? What are the controversies surrounding the issues?

1. Why were the Indians not better prepared for the 7th Cavalry’s attack on their village? (152)
2. Where was Sitting Bull during the fight? Why? (157)
3. What was Custer’s intention at the ford where Medicine Tail Coulee empties into the Little Bighorn? (161)
4. Why did Custer divide his already inferior forces into two battalions? (163)
5. What happened to the soldiers during the fight? (171)
6. Who were the “suicide boys” and what’s the story? (172)

Did the Indians know that they were fighting Custer? (172)

7. Who did kill Custer? (179)
8. Why did the Indians mutilate the bodies? (193)

## Appendix D

### *Last Stand at Little Big Horn* A Video/DVD

The Battle Where Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse Fought Custer and an American Myth was Born

Written by Paul Stekler and James Welch

Narrated by N. Scott Momaday

### Video/DVD Log

#### Minutes

- 0 Introduction - 2 minutes
- 2 Quotes from journal of U.S. Military
- 4 "Because we were an obstacle we had to be removed" Johnson Holy Rock, Son of Battle Survivor
- 6 History of Lakota's survival on the plains
- 7 Joe Medicine Crow - telling about whites coming

#### Leading up to the Event - Background in East and with Indians and then conflicts between immigrants and Indians

- 8 Road to Little Bighorn began in the East
- 9 Windolph's daughter talks about her father's experience in cavalry (last living survivor of Custer's expedition)
- 10 Custer picture - quotes "Genius at self-promotion"
- 11 Slotkin - Cultural Historian
- 12 Coming West - Bozeman Trail

Historian talking about what whites thought, expected, needed - They saw the west as "empty spaces - we can take it"

#### Johnson Holy Rock

- 13 Red Cloud "We are melting"
- 14 Story of Thomas - a white immigrant killed on trail west
- 15 Fetterman story  
Crazy Horse - Johnson Holy Rock, speaker
- 16 Laramie Treaty - Sherman said this peace was temporary
- 17 Coming west on railroad - Indian source for food diminishing rapidly
- 18 Sheridan - "Keep Indians under control"

#### Custer and his military

- 19 Custer's idea of Manifest Destiny
- 20 Windolph's quote by daughter - "Custer was MEAN - didn't care about the men"
- 21 Soldier's experience, alcoholism, etc.

#### More Conflicts leading to more pressure to stop the Indian

- 22 Washatau killed women and children
- 23 Army's Motivations - historian  
Sherman

23 Joseph Flying Lakota "People wanted to tame the Indian"

#### **More encroachment into Indian Country**

24 Black Hills - Lakota story - coming out, rebirth

25 Johnson Holy Rock "Words of Black Elk"

25 1874 Military came to the Black Hills under the guise of a scientific survey - breaking the Laramie Treaty. To Custer and his men it was a "prolonged picnic with band concerts"

27 Front Page news - Gold discovered, and in a year 25,000 men came

#### **Indian situation at the time**

27 Either Red Cloud or Crazy Horse was grieving for his daughter who had died of cholera - killed whites on the trail - small groups at a time

28 Sitting Bull - defied government edicts

#### **Federal and Media push for Indians onto Reservations**

29 1876 Jan 30 - announcement that all Indians must go to reservations and the military would go after any who refused

29 Slotkin, historian, said the Americans couldn't imagine ever losing any of this war because they had gattling guns, so many men, cannons

The excitement rose because they imagined it as a great stage show

#### **Indians in Montana**

30 Ted Rising Sun, Cheyenne "It was a time when The People all came together in Montana."

31 Preparing to move

32 Sundance and Sitting Bull's vision

Crazy Horse's pushing back the cavalry on a few occasions

#### **Military**

33 Soldiers approaching, personal reflections about fears of the Indians

33 Custer marched exhausted troops long past midnight

34 White Man Runs Him - father of Joe Medicine Crow

Crows wanted U.S. military to take their Lakota enemies

35 Custer's cavalry and the split up of troops

36 Daughter of Winthrop - "Custer would get the glory"

#### **Words of individuals who were there - images and feelings**

36 Johnson Holy Rock - my father saw a line of horsemen on the hill and a flag waving in the breeze

37 Army Man - "felt the sound like angry bees"

#### **Ledger Pictures - Story of the battle - killed**

38 Sitting Bull prayed - too old to fight

38 Wooden Leg, Cheyenne

39 Joe Medicine Crow talks about scouts for Custer singing war and death songs, and he sings a war song his father taught him

40 Custer discharged Indian scouts

- 40 Hundreds of Indians hiding - Kate Bighead with them
- 41 Cheyenne led charge
  - Crazy Horse
- 41 Two Moons - film of him (black and white)
  - Ted Rising Sun, son of survivor "Like a flock of magpies"
- 42 "All white men are dead" Indians said (Custer's group)
- 43 Reno and Benteen's command was left alone on hilltop - and they wondered, where was Custer?
- 44 Very little celebrating in Indian camps because of their losses. Women were grief stricken
  - Women and wives of soldiers, waiting and grieving
  - Warriors left to go to the hills
- 45 Benteen and Reno see naked and dead of Custer's group - stench
  - Windolph's daughter said her father "put their friends in graves"

### **News Hits the East**

- 47 News of disaster hits the East and the media transforms it immediately
- 48 Exterminate every Indian! Cry from the east

### **Indians who fought and won**

- 48 Army chased Sitting Bull's group into the hills
- Crazy Horse's wife was ill with tuberculosis - one by one the groups surrendered and moved onto the reservations
- 49 Sitting Bull went into Canada - reporters plagued him for comments - his anger still evident
- 50 Crazy Horse is stabbed in the back with a bayonet in a Fort after he surrendered.
- 51 His people stole his body and took it to a place - no one will tell where he is buried - ever

### **Conclusion**

- 51 Many Indians lived to tell the story, but whites wrote the history
  - Telling about the building of the Myth - buildup of Custer's legend in dramas, Buffalo Bill, Elizabeth Custer, musicals
- 53 Elizabeth Custer lived to see her husband recreated on film time and time again.
- 53 He is no longer a hero but we still have the heroic images before us - even as late as 1991.
- 54 But for Plains Indians, their stories and songs kept the history alive

## Appendix E

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### Chapter 1 - 3 Quiz - *Killing Custer* Name \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Napikwans
- 2. Heavy Runner
- 3. Owl Child
- 4. Baker
- 5. Joe Kipp
- 6. Red Cloud
- 7. Black Hills
- 8. Sitting Bull
- 9. Ft. Laramie

- A. Killed Clark over public humiliation
- B. Site of a Treaty
- C. Made medicine
- D. Blackfeet name for whites
- E. Knowingly attack the wrong Pikuni camp
- F. Indian scout for Baker
- G. Sacred Place to Lakota
- H. Marias Massacre victim
- I. Signed a treaty with the whites

- 10. T/F Red Cloud fought beside Sitting Bull at the Battle of the Little Bighorn
- 11. T/F Welch suggests that greed for gold led to the last Indian wars on the plains.
- 12. Custer depended on      a. Loyalty of his men    b. Luck      for success in battle.
- 13. Year of the Battle of the Little Big Horn    a. 1876   b. 1865
- 14. Year of the Massacre on the Marias    a. 1900   b. 1870
- 15. According to Welch, year Americans first came (officially) to Montana Indian territory  
    a. 1800   b. 1806

## Appendix F: Final Test

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### *Killing Custer Final Test Name \_\_\_\_\_*

#### **Matching**

<u>1.</u> Napikwans	A. Negotiated a pension policy for his people
<u>2.</u> Akecita	B. Cheyenne leader
<u>3.</u> Heavy Runner	C. Made medicine
<u>4.</u> Owl Child	D. 20 <sup>th</sup> century American Indian leader
<u>5.</u> Baker	E. Marias Massacre victim
<u>6.</u> Russell Means	F. Site of a Treaty
<u>7.</u> Canada	G. Boasted of killing Custer
<u>8.</u> Joe Kipp	H. Lakota name for whites
<u>9.</u> Red Cloud	I. Sacred Place to Lakota
<u>10.</u> Dull Knife	J. Native American military police
<u>11.</u> Rain in the Face	K. Place Sitting Bull retreated to
<u>12.</u> Black Hills	L. Killed Clark over public humiliation
<u>13.</u> Wasichus	M. Blackfeet name for whites
<u>14.</u> Sitting Bull	N. Knowingly attacked the wrong Pikuni camp
<u>15.</u> Ft. Laramie	O. Indian scout for Baker

#### **TF**

- 16. The purpose of the 1887 Dawes Act was to protect the Indian's land.
- 17. Welch describes boarding schools as a positive experience for Indian children.
- 18. Red Cloud fought beside Sitting Bull at the Battle of the Little Bighorn
- 19. Welch paints a relatively complex picture of Custer in this book.
- 20. Cheyenne and the Sioux were relatively unprepared for the attack by Custer.
- 21. Welch suggests that greed for gold led to the last Indian wars on the plains.
- 22. Juliette Crump suggested Welch name this book probably because it is about the Battle of the Little Bighorn and Custer's death.
- 23. Juliette Crump suggested Welch name this book probably because it is about the myth of Custer and how other truths sometimes contradict the myth enough to "kill" it.
- 24. In battle, Custer depended most on the expert fighting skills of his men.
- 25. One of the purposes of the Sundance was a ceremony for initiation into manhood
- 26. In preparation for the Sundance, only men and not women took vows.
- 27. Many Indians believed that when they danced the Ghost Dance, they would be lifted up and freed from the power of the whites.
- 28. The Ghost Dance was banned on most reservations.
- 29. When Sitting Bull told his people about his vision of soldiers, like grasshoppers, falling into camp, the Indian people believed they would lose the battle to the American army.
- 30. So many Indians were gathered together before the Battle of the Little Bighorn because they were preparing to fight against the Americans.

**Multiple Choice:**

  31. Year of the Battle of the Little Big Horn a. 1876 b. 1865

  32. Year of the Massacre on the Marias a. 1900 b. 1870

  33. According to Welch, year Americans first came (officially) to Montana Indian territory  
a. 1800 b. 1806

  34. Indian who participated in Wild West show a. Sitting Bull b. Red Cloud c. Spotted Tail

  35. AIM stands for a. Army in Motion b. American Indian Motivation c. American Indian Movement.

  36. In Welch and Stekler's book, there is little controversy over which of the following? a. Where Custer was during the battle b. Where Sitting Bull was during the battle. c. Who killed Custer d. Whether the Indian sources can be trusted.

  37. Which of the following is not true of Custer? a. When he was assigned to protect the Northern Pacific surveyors, Custer spent most of his time hunting. b. He graduated from West Point last in his class c. Although he was a deserter himself, he still shot deserters. d. Most of his men didn't admire him.

  38. Indian boarding schools were not established a. to make the Indian "white"  
b. to cut him/her off from traditional culture and values. c. to train the Indians for jobs equal to middle and upper-class whites d. to train Indians for laboring jobs

  39. Crazy Horse died after a. Soldiers captured him as he tried to flee into Canada b. He became ill with tuberculosis in the reservation agency c. he was stabbed, trying to avoid being shut up in an agency prison.

  40. Sitting Bull died after a. a long life with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show b. he is shot in the head and chest during a riot surrounding the issue of the Ghost Dance c. He dances for three days with the Ghost Dancers

  41. Welch included stories of western movies in this book to show a. how many stories about Indians were true b. How much our beliefs about Indians have been shaped by movies c. To prove he knew what he was talking about.

  42. The Custer myth was created by a. poets b. movie makers c. journalists d. Buffalo Bill's Wild West show e. All of the above f. a and b g. None of the above

Whose voice (most likely) is each of the following? A. Stekler B. Welch

  43. "Earlier, when the three bands of Hunkpapas, Oglalas, and Cheyennes had decided to come together as one village, Sitting Bull became the de facto big chief because his band, the Hunkpapas, was the largest, and because he was the most forceful leader. But with the arrival of the many other bands, it became clear that a hierarchy was needed."

  44. "Red Cloud and his fellows, in spite of Sitting Bull's contempt, had gained concessions for their people in the Treaty of 1868."

  45. "But at night you are alone with your imagination. Especially if the moon has lit up the battlefield for you. You can see the soldiers racing their horses up Calhoun Ridge from the ford at Medicine Tail Coulee. You can see where the skirmish lines were set, where riflemen got down off their horses to protect the rear of the retreating troopers. You can see down the hill where hundreds of Indians were crawling on their bellies, on hands and knees, darting from yucca plant to yucca plant, all the time advancing."

  46. "At the time of Sitting Bull's vision, the assembled people knew that the soldiers were close by, looking to capture them, disarm them, and drive them to the Great Sioux Reservation. On December 3, 1875, the Secretary of the Interior, Zachariah Chandler, after meeting with the President, Ulysses S. Grant, and the Secretary of War, William W. Belknap, sent a communiqué' to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs."

\_\_\_ 47. "After much folderol, which included continuing jealousy and rivalry between Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, a spot was picked for the meeting—eight miles from Red Cloud Agency (neither chief would go to the other's agency).

\_\_\_ 48. A primary document is a. a piece of information in the original hand or voice of the resource. b. The first piece of information found. c. A most important piece of information or document

\_\_\_ 49. At the end of their filming, they listen to a. White Man Runs Him b. Joe Medicine Crow sing a "war song."

\_\_\_ 50. Previous to the Battle of the Little Bighorn, all but which of the following events occurred? a. Baker Massacre on the Marias b. Sand Creek Massacre c. Ghost Dance sweeps Sioux reservations d. U.S. government issues ultimatum that Indians have to be on Great Sioux Reservation by January 31, 1876.

### **Essay and Reflection**

51. Name and explain three things that have either changed or stayed the same since the time of the battle and Welch's return to the Battle of the Little Bighorn site. You may choose a combination of changed/stayed the same.

52. Explain what happened at either *Wounded Knee* or at *Sand Creek*. Be sure to identify a specific individual involved in the one you choose.

53. Explain three examples of Welch providing evidence that contradicted previous evidence or facts although all are true.

54. Describe three of the individuals Welch met in Chapter 8.

55. Who is the most heroic in Welch and Stekler's account? You must first define *heroic*.

56. Having read the entire book, and looking at the book as a whole, explain one or two of the following: the *disturbing, confusing, interesting, and enlightening* aspects of *Killing Custer* for you.

57. What are five things you learn about *writing, making a film, ways to approach a project, etc.* from reading the final sections in the book, and what do we learn about Welch as a person, as a writer, as a researcher?

## Appendix G

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### Expedition and Memoir Writing (Optional)

**Expedition to Marias Massacre Site:** Be on the bus by the east doors by 8:30. Bring lunch--we MAY NOT STOP--and hat, warm coat, gloves, notebook and pencil/pen. You may want to write on the bus on the way home. The trip home will be for reflection and writing--no CDs or headphones, no radio. There will be no conversation for two hours once you exit the bus at the massacre site. This is a sacred place.

We need two people to be in charge of videoing the presentation and the experience, two people to photograph--with digital and with regular camera.

**Assignment:** After the visit to the Marias Massacre Site - Imagine you are one of the people involved in what you learned and the experience has happened to you. Write a Journal (handwritten, like a diary) - a minimum of three pages. The journal may be narrative, descriptive, but may also include opinion as well as facts (numbers, names, places, sequence of events). Revise and rewrite this historical fiction.

**Note:** Since 1997, with profound impact on all students, several classes of juniors and seniors at Simms High School in Simms, MT have experienced the above expedition and writing assignment.

**Alternate Activity:** Acknowledging that nothing would replace the experience of actually being at the Marias Massacre Site, students may access the painting titled *Baker Massacre* by Blackfeet artist King Kuka (1946-2004). Mr. Kuka envisioned what the camp might have looked like at dawn just before the attack and offers a poignant visual that could be partnered with Welch's words in the text and journal writing, as described above, or with poetry composition. (The severity of the cold, children tucked deep in furs, the light of the dawn, all a prelude to the attack ...) View the painting at <http://mhs.mt.gov/education/textbook/Chapter7/Chapter7.asp> from *Montana: Stories of the Land*, by Krys Holmes. Chapter 7. p. 135. Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press. 2008.

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## Appendix H

### Evaluation for Essay and Rubrics

Students, as well as teachers, may use this to evaluate the essays of their peers.

Name of Student Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Author: \_\_\_\_\_

**EVALUATION: *Killing Custer***      **Evaluation Points:**      **Title, 2 possible**      **Total = \_\_\_\_\_ / 100**

From the three categories, choose which #1 to circle, which #2, and so forth. Last, based on the point value of the numbers your circled, calculate how many of the points possible to award the essay.

**14 points for each one - In an EXCELLENT essay:**

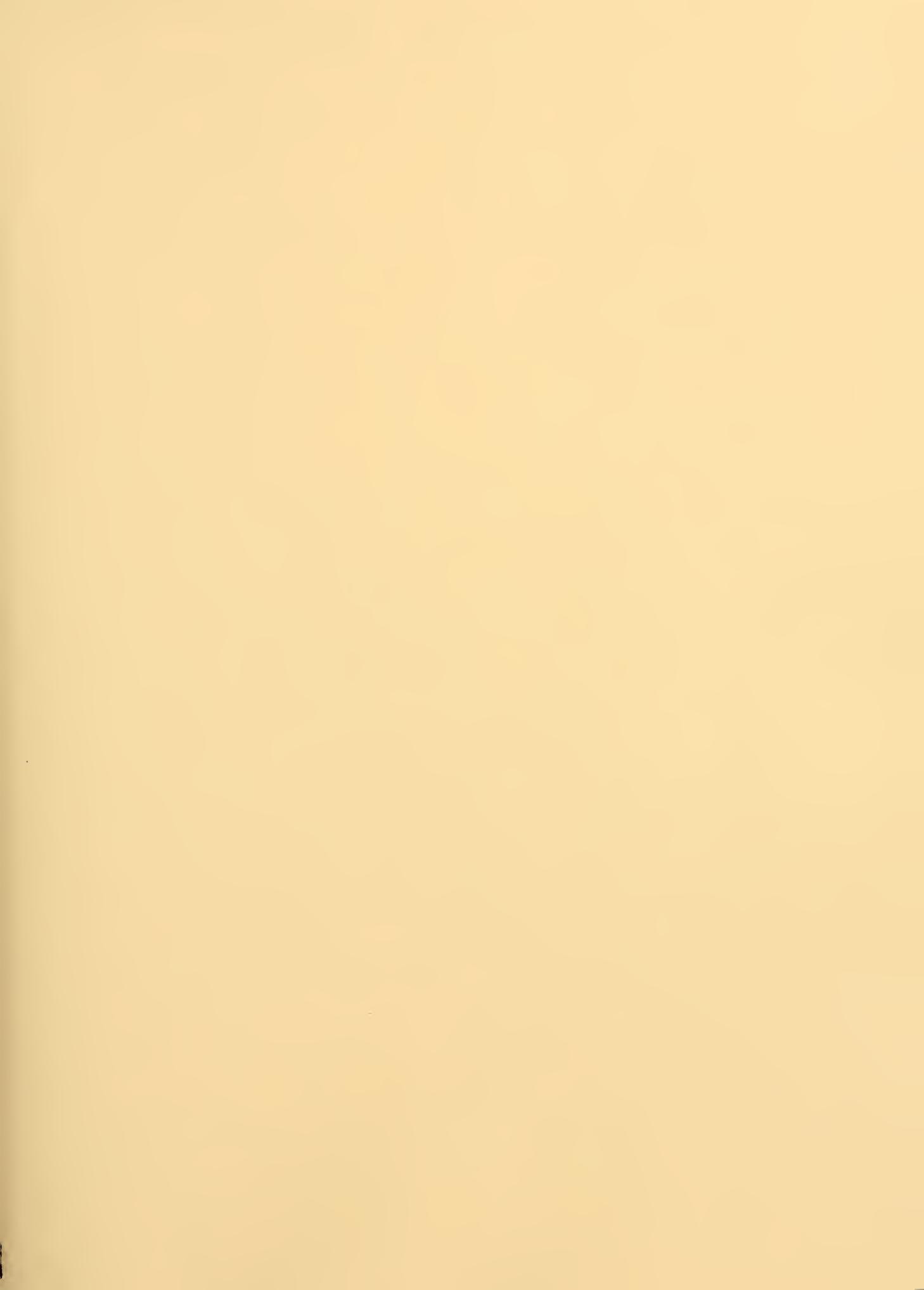
1. The INTRODUCTION begins with a striking image, ends with a clear thesis, and provides interesting background information about the book that engages the reader.
2. IDEAS AND CONTENT: The examples that the writer presents to explain the reasons behind his/her feelings or opinions are developed, specific, clear, solid evidence from the text of the book. They relate to the writer's intent, as introduced in the first paragraph.
3. ORGANIZATION: The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, or presentation of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text. This includes: an inviting introduction, thoughtful transitions, logical order of details, pacing.
4. VOICE: The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individual, compelling and engaging. The writer crafts the writing with an awareness and respect for the audience and the purpose for writing.
5. WORD CHOICE: Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging, the paper maintains a consistent point-of-view, and there is no slang.
6. SENTENCE FLUENCY: The writing has an easy flow, rhythm, and cadence. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading.
7. CONVENTIONS: The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (spelling, punctuation, and grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to publish.

**12 points for each one - In a GOOD essay:**

1. The INTRODUCTION begins with a clear but ordinary sentence, ends with a clear thesis, and informs the reader what the essay will be about, but the paragraph is either uninspired or disorganized.
2. IDEAS AND CONTENT: The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general. The reader is left with questions and more information is needed. Ideas are clear but not detailed.
3. ORGANIZATION: The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion. Sometimes transitions are fuzzy, the structure is too predictable, and the conclusion may not tie up all loose ends. (Introduction, thoughtful transitions, logical order of details, pacing)
4. VOICE: The writer seems sincere but not fully engaged or involved in the writing. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling. The writer relies on obvious generalities rather than asserting his/her own voice on an issue.
5. WORD CHOICE: Words are adequate and correct but lack originality; the writing relies on weak verbs, everyday nouns and adjectives, and lack of interesting adverbs. Writing lacks spark, although at times it might have some color/interest.
6. SENTENCE FLUENCY: The writing has occasional flow, rhythm, and cadence. Sentences are clear, with structure that does not impede oral reading.
7. CONVENTIONS: The writer demonstrates a grasp of standard writing conventions (spelling, punctuation, and grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions to enhance readability. Errors do not interfere with a reader's understanding but would need some fixing before the paper is ready for publication.

**11 points for each one - In a WEAK essay:**

1. The INTRODUCTION'S beginning is flat; the introduction is unfocussed, and the writer's intent is unclear.
2. IDEAS AND CONTENT: The examples used seem arbitrary or disconnected from any unifying purpose.
3. ORGANIZATION: The conclusion adds nothing, goes nowhere new.
4. WORD CHOICE: The writer has few sensory images; the writer primarily uses weak verbs; the point of view shifts from first to second person, and the writer relies on slang.
5. SENTENCE FLUENCY: The writing is often confusing or boring, and most sentences start the same way and are all approximately the same length.
6. CONVENTIONS: The writer makes several spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors per paragraph.





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Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

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